

# **The IUPUI Center for Urban Health**

## **Enhancing Community Wellness Through Research**

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### **Abstract**

Urban sustainability is a new philosophy of developing healthy, productive communities that (1) promote and use locally-produced foods and products, (2) ensure safe access to natural spaces, and (3) establish low-carbon transportation systems. Urban living is arguably the most sustainable form of community given the concentration of resources, protection of arable land, and vertical structure of housing. In fact, urbanization is becoming the global norm; the percentage of global population living in urban settings has increased from less than 30% in 1950 to 47% in 2000; the percentage of urban dwellers is expected to increase to 60% by 2025. The promise of a healthy and sustainable urban future is clouded, however, by the reality of environmental insults, economic disparities, and behavioral pressures that exist in modern cities. The challenge is not how to build a shiny carbon-neutral city from scratch, but rather how to transition our current urban state toward one that is healthier, has less environmental impact, and is more prepared to respond and adjust to variety of environmental, social, and health changes in the future.

The central theme of the IUPUI Center for Urban Health is **Environment, Community, and Health**. Each of these “spheres” is connected by the built and social environment from a contextual standpoint and by geospatial referencing from an integration standpoint. The goal of the Center for Urban Health is to enhance health and sustainability for urban populations, with an eye toward both environmental legacies (i.e., reduced contamination, removing social and economic disparities) and emerging threats (i.e., climate change, water quality and quantity). The Center is currently recruiting Investigators across campus and across the community to provide research linkages, is funding several Urban Health Graduate Fellows, is developing a Seed Funding program for investigators through a Protocol Development Team, and is funding a Visiting Scholars program to enhance research at IUPUI.